

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed November 8, 2004 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1-11 were previously canceled. Claims 13 and 23-24 are canceled by the present amendment. Claims 12, 14, 15, 17-19, and 22 have been amended. Claims 12, 14-22, and 25 are pending in this application, with claims 12 and 25 being the only independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as herein amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed November 8, 2004, claims 12, 13, and 17-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by DE 461 849.

Claims 12, 13, and 16-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by DE 911 316.

Claims 14, 15, and 21-24 were found to contain allowable subject matter. In view of the allowable subject matter, independent claim 12 is rewritten to include the limitations of dependent claim 24 and intervening claims 23 and 13. Instead of requiring every other one of the grate steps to be a stationary step, claim 12 is also rewritten so that at least one stationary step is arranged between each longitudinally adjacent pair of movable grates. Since claim 12 now incorporates allowable subject matter, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 12 is allowable.

New independent claim 25 is based on original independent claim 12 and further recites that there is an enclosure which defines an underblast chamber for directing air to the grate. Support for this limitation is found in Figs. 1 and 4 and page 8, lines 9-14 of the specification. New independent claim 25 further recites that a housing protecting the drive devices includes a first longitudinal section that is surrounded by the underblast chamber and a second longitudinal section

that is only partially surrounded by the underblast chamber, the second section being sufficiently open toward a bottom to allow access for maintenance and replacement of the drive devices. These limitations are disclosed in Fig. 4 and page 11, lines 4-19 of the application. Neither of the German references cited in the Office Action discloses these limitations. Neither of these references discloses a housing that has a first longitudinal section enclosed by an underblast chamber and a second longitudinal section partially surrounded by an underblast chamber, wherein the second section is sufficiently open toward the bottom to allow access for maintenance and replacement of the drive devices. Accordingly, independent claim 25 is allowable over the prior art of record.

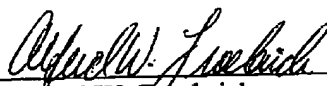
Dependent claims 14-22, being dependent on independent claim 12, are deemed allowable for at least the same reasons expressed above with respect to independent claim 12.

The application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

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